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**FOOD** GET READY FOR THE CHINESE  
NEW YEAR'S EVE MENU **P.8**

今日北京

# BEIJING TODAY

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## CHINA'S MODERN HEART

METROPOLISES GET ALL THE ATTENTION, BUT THE  
TRUE HEART OF MODERN CHINA LIES A FEW TIERS DOWN.  
ZHOU DONG'S PAINTINGS CAPTURE THE SPIRIT OF  
THE THIRD- AND FOURTH-TIER CITIES. **P.4**



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BEIJING YOUTH DAILY

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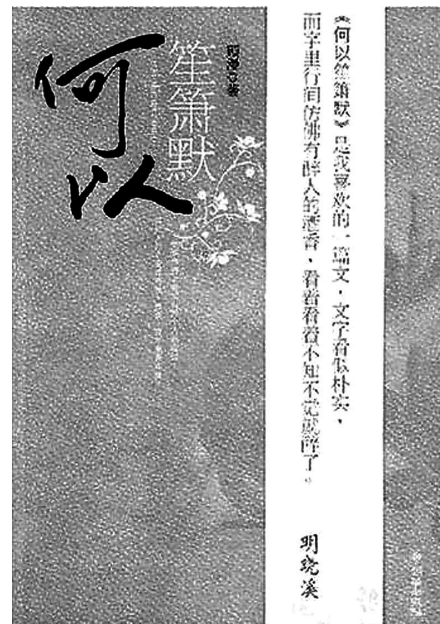
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# ENTERTAINMENT



Photos by douban.com

## Silent Separation Delivers on Girls' Dream of Lawyer Love

BY DIAO DIAO

**T**he TV series *Silent Separation* has been one of the most popular shows since its debut earlier this month. Baring a few jokes about how Zhao Mosheng returned from seven years abroad with less luggage than the average stewardess, most viewers consider it a great adaptation of the 2007 novel *He Yi Sheng Xiao Mo*.

The novel tells the confounded love story of its lead characters Zhao Mosheng and He Yichen. Though unnecessary-

ily complicated and often hard to relate to, the book has been a hit with young female readers who fall for the smart and handsome He Yichen without fail.

He and Zhao meet in university when Zhao asks to snap a photo of the handsome boy when she spots him beneath a tree. The two have a sweet courtship until one misunderstanding drives a wedge between them.

Zhao's father, the mayor of the city, finds He and offers him a big sum of money

to go to the US with her daughter before he is tossed into jail for embezzlement. He refuses, believing his own father's death to be indirectly caused by Zhao's. He also believes Zhao cheated him by not disclosing her wealthy parentage.

At the same time, Zhao meets a competitor in the form of He Yimei, He Yichen's adopted sister. Yichen and Yimei were given similar names by their parents and grew up together. When Yichen's

father died, Yimei's parents adopted Yichen. Yichen treats Yimei as a sister even though she loves him.

When Yimei confronts Zhao Mosheng and tells her that her love can't defeat the time she and Yichen spent together, Zhao takes her father's advice and leaves to study in the US alone.

She meets He again after returning from the US, and gradually they resolve their misunderstandings. As in all such confusing melodramas, Zhao and He resolve their differences and live happily ever after.

While many younger female readers imagine meeting their own handsome lawyer, older readers said the characters in the story were "too perfect" – the kinds of flat cutouts that belong in Korean soap operas or Japanese girls' comics rather than the multidimensional people one meets in real life.

Nevertheless, its popularity reflects the trends and expectations – deluded though they may be – of modern Chinese romance. ■

## Creativity Nowhere to be Found in 'Miss Granny'

BY DIAO DIAO

**I**n the month since its screen debut on January 8, the film *20 Once Again*, also known as "Miss Granny," has received some surprisingly negative responses.

No one likes the ill-tempered old woman, including her daughter-in-law who ends up in a hospital due to mental strain the woman places on her.

The family ultimately decides to send the granny to nursing home. On the way, she passes by a photo studio and decides to take one more portrait. As soon as the shutter is pressed, she somehow returns to the way she looked in her early 20s.

The granny joins a band as its lead singer

and ends up in a love triangle with a musical director and another handsome musician. But in the middle of her love story, a serious accident forces her to choose between living on as a 20-year-old girl and going back to her real life.

Although the Korean version of the comedy topped the box office, the Chinese remake has not enjoyed anywhere near as much success.

Most complaints are focused on the actors, their bland attempt to copy their Korean counterparts and the bitter failure of director Chen Zhengdao.

Chen Bolin plays the musical director and Yang Zishan the 20-year-old granny.



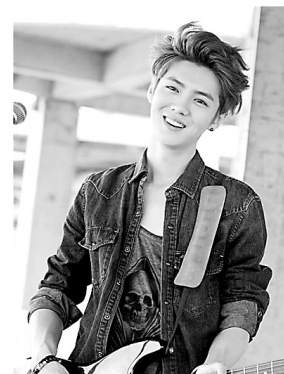
Yang Zishan



The old granny



Chen Bolin



Lu Han Photos by douban.com

Viewers have been calling for Yang's retirement ever since she played Zheng Wei in *So Young*, the role that marked the last time she demonstrated a modicum of improvement as an actress.

While Chen is handsome enough for his role, viewers were similarly disappointed by his performance. Most said that compared with his debut film *Blue Gate Crossing*, Chen's acting has taken several steps backwards.

Viewers who watched the Korean version last year questioned why they were expected to spend money again on the exact same story. The only new element in the Chinese version was a forced placement of

*Princess Pearl*, a TV series used in many nostalgic films, and a reference to JD, one of China's biggest e-commerce companies.

The other lead actor is Lu Han, a '90s generation heartthrob. Many theatergoers complained about how young women began screaming and going crazy at the first sight of their favorite un-established actor.

If there's a bright side to the cinematic disaster, it might be the soundtrack. *20 Once Again's* soundtrack album is ranked higher than the music of any recently released film.

Of course, whether that is due to the quality of the songs or Lu's presence is another question. ■



# MUSIC

## Upbeat Indie Jazz with Er Yi Band

BY DIAO DIAO

A surprise win at a Shanghai music festival in which they never intended to compete gave Er Yi the motivation to get serious about their sound.

One of China's few indie jazz bands, Er Yi was founded by two classmates Dameng and Cindy Wang at Beijing International Studies University in 2011. Their passion for jazz quickly attracted Wang Qiushi, Wang Shanzhuo, Dong Hang and Kuang Zhaolong to join the lineup.

The band started out with a handful of jazz standards and slowly began adding songs of their own creation. Their most popular song of 2014 was an upbeat, jazzy take on "Jingle Bells."

"We found that we tend to listen more to old songs than new ones. Most of our new compositions try to tap into what we liked about songs of the past," Qiushi said.

Their original song "Though We Can Not Pogo" has been especially popular with its upbeat and delightful rhythm and Broadway-like hooks that would hardly have been out of place in the late 1930s. Singer Cindy Wang's voice is thick with an easy feeling that captures the features sought after in European jazz of the era.

"Pogo" was recorded as part of the 2013-2015 *Super School*

*Fighter Collection*. The collection's founder said that it was rare to see such a unique jazz band in China – especially one with the power to make listeners move.

Most of Er Yi's members are still students and the question of a musical career remains far off. For the time being they say they are more concerned with studying music and writing songs, Wang said.

The members said they feel lucky that their performances have helped them to meet many other excellent musicians who gave them pointers on their music.

When talking about her indie peers, Wang seems to have little appreciation for the moodiness and hoarse voices that have become so prevalent in Chinese rock. "Worry and sentimentality can be expressed in other ways, like what we are doing," she said.

"We used to think there was a clear line between what is mainstream and what is indie. We thought that mainstream was commercialized and not like what we want," Qiushi said. "Now we've realized that there is excellent commercial music as well as coarse indie music. I think developing that objective attitude is part of growing up." ■

### Temple Bar

⌚ 9 pm, February 4  
📍 206 Guloudong Dajie, Dongcheng  
💎 Free



Photos by Er Yi band

## LIVE SHOW ROUNDUP

Beijing boasts one of the world's most vibrant indie music scenes. Support our local artists with a trip to one of this week's live performances!



### The Big Wave @ School Bar

The Big Wave is holding its first session in Beijing. It's themed on one of their songs, "No Such Disease," which will appear on an upcoming album. The session will also feature Elenore and DID.

⌚ January 31, 9:30-11:30 pm  
📍 53 Wudaoying Hutong, Dongcheng  
💎 Free

### Winter Folk @ Slow Living

Su Yu and Lin Tianran will have a folk session at Slow Living club. Su is a 30-year-old folk singer who won the Best Folk Artist Award in Douban's first competition. Lin is also a folk singer from Lijiang, Yunnan province.

⌚ January 31, 4-8 pm  
📍 73 Daxing Hutong, Dongcheng  
💎 60 yuan (pre sale), 80 yuan (at door)

### Krypton's Sons @ Mao Livehouse

Krypton's Sons is a Russian band that plays psychedelic rock. They use bass and guitar to create a scientific and dreamy effect. They will start their China tour in Beijing on January 31.

⌚ January 31, 8:30-10 pm  
📍 111 Guloudong Dajie, Dongcheng  
💎 70 yuan (pre sale), 90 yuan (at door)

### Ajinai Band @ Jianghu Bar

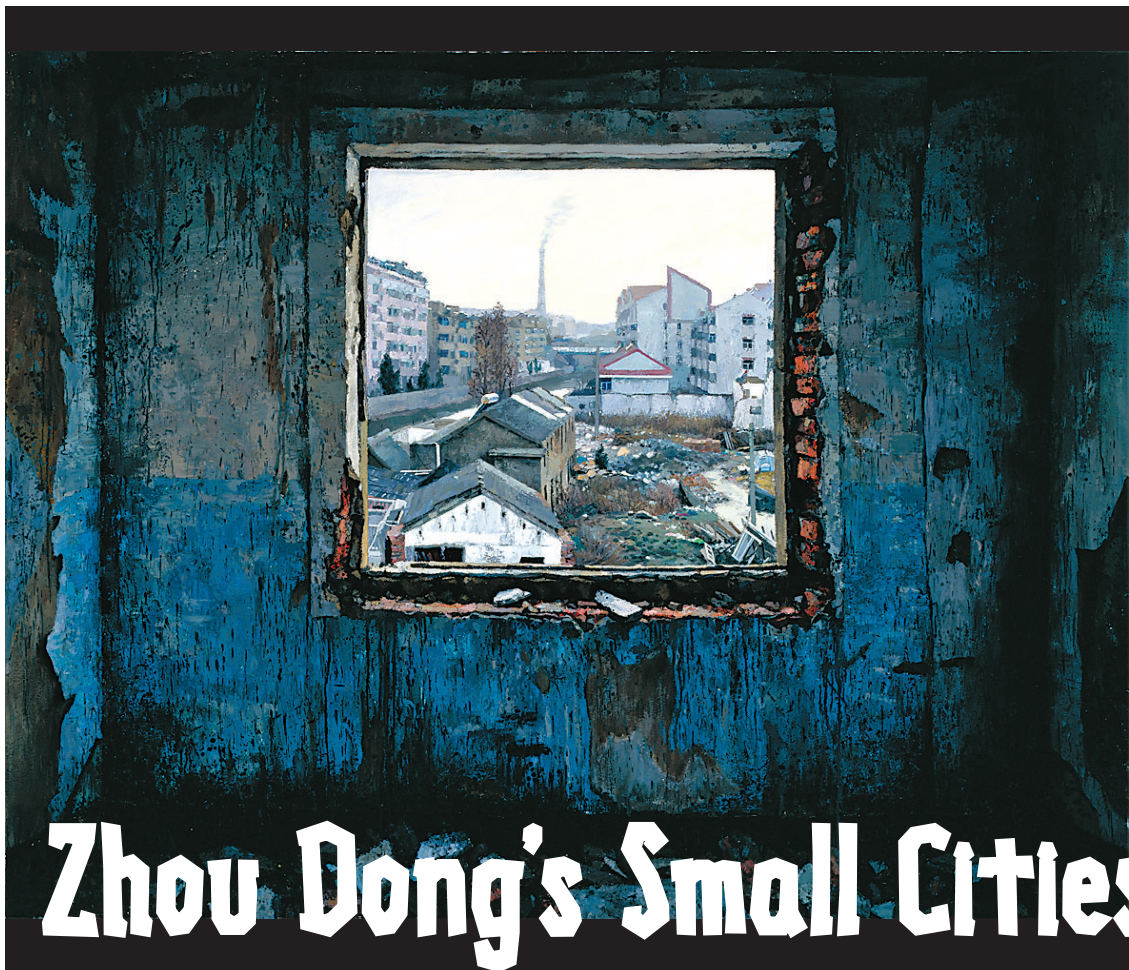
Ajinai takes its name from the Sanskrit word for a majestic and auspicious stallion. Ancient legend tells the story of an Indian king who had an impressive and magical green stallion. When Buddhism entered Mongolia, it took the term with it to describe the finest horses. Ajinai's music blends many foreign cultures for a diverse sound that's free of worldly boundaries.

⌚ January 31, 9:30-11:30 pm  
📍 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Dongcheng  
💎 50 yuan (pre sale), 80 yuan (at door)





# ARTISTS



Due West



Small Cities

Photos by Zhou Dong

## Zhou Dong's Small Cities

BY LYNNE WANG



Whatever



This is an Advertisement of an Opening Ceremony



I Don't Want to Fall in Love in This City

While international attention may be on the bustling metropolises of Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong, it's the smaller cities that represent the heart of modern China.

In his recent exhibition at the Chinese Academy of Oil Painting, emerging artist Zhou Dong showed off his works painted over the past five years that depict the conditions and spirit of third- and fourth-tier cities. Though Zhou's art is often absent figures, viewers can still feel a strong sense of emotion and strength from his poetic scenes.

"The rapid evolution of Chinese society since the 1990s has brought new cultures and fruitful lifestyles into the ordinary lives of millions of Chinese. This is especially true for those who live in remote areas: whether to leave their hometown can be life's hardest question," Zhou says.

It's a dilemma Zhou attempts to answer in many of his creations.

In *Empty Chairs at Empty Tables*, Zhou depicts an abandoned courtyard seen through the window of a dilapidated building. The wall offers a vantage into a three-dimensional space that implies a third person's perspective, as if a young man is standing just behind the picture and hesitating about whether to leave his hopeless city.

That hesitation becomes more explicit in *Due West*, which depicts Zhou's trip to Inner Mongolia when he stopped at a toll station. Adopt-

ing pike blue and earthy yellow as its tones, the picture gives a sense that hope and restriction coexist.

"Whenever people are in front of a road, they want to know what awaits them at the end. Despite hope and desire like the bit of yellow in the sky, there are always 'tollgates' to restrict the way," Zhou says.

It's a vivid statement for people from the inner city, such as Zhou. As a man who was born and grew up in a typical small Chinese city, the paintings reflect his early life experience.

"I was born in 1980 in a remote county outside Yancheng, Jiangsu province. It was an hour from the city. At one time I thought downtown Yancheng was the center of the world and was so excited to go there," Zhou says.

But after graduating from middle school in his hometown, Zhou started to study and live in his dream place and the boundary of the "world" became much larger. It was an era when fruitful lifestyles were widely recognized in inner cities thanks to the accessibility of videotapes and the spread of popular culture.

For the many young people, the outside world was an unstoppable lure.

"That's how it was for me. The raucous voice of Dick and Cowboy [a popular rock band from Taiwan in the 1990s] or a new gangster film always sparked my imagination about urban life," Zhou says.

"I was working in a primary school as an art teacher and every day was the same. But going to a

university never wiped the possibilities from my mind. Whenever July came, the date of the College Entrance Exam, I felt bitter and lost," Zhou says.

*Painful Romance*, created in 2014, seems the easiest way to understand his pain. Against a background of shabby villages, Zhou shows a new gate opening to an endless road in the middle of the picture. Although snowdrifts cover run-down surroundings and add a bit romance, it's hard to mistake the picture for anything other than a farewell.

In 2001, Zhou said goodbye to his hometown and started his art journey in Beijing. Zhou found acceptance at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in the bustling capital. He finished his degree in oil painting in 2009 and completed his master's degree last year.

Looking back on Zhou's life, it's no surprise to see his creations focus on the world of smaller cities. But what makes him different from so many of his hometown peers is his persistence and dedication to his dream.

"Good art is based on reality and strong life experiences, even if its technique is still lacking. It's only in this way that an artist can pour all his energy into creating and exploring new possibilities," Zhou says.

"For me, finding a way to use ordinary life to explore bigger questions of humanity and philosophy is the ultimate objective of art." ■

artand.cn/zhoudong



# A TRAVEL



Photo by CFP

## Discover Beidaihe's Winter Beauty

BY LI RUIQI

While many people are familiar with summer's rolling ocean waves, winter offers a different kind of beachside beauty in the form of frozen coasts. Beidaihe is a paradise for photography fans, seafood lovers and families looking for a weekend winter outing.

### Geziwo Park

Geziwo Park is the first stop for any visitor. Its Eagle Beak Pavilion is the best place to take in the sunrise and offers a great view of the icy Bohai Sea. It's also a great place to find starfish and shells whenever the tide leaves Daqiantan beach. Nearly a third of China's migratory birds stop off at the beach between May and October every year.

Geziwo Park is found at the northeast end of Beidaihe. It stretches out to the Bohai Sea via a cliff whose shape resembles an eagle's beak. The cracks in the cliff are home to pigeons, which earned it the name Geziwo, or pigeon's nest. The park's construction halted in 1937 due to the Japanese invasion. It was later completed and opened to the public in the 1980s.

#### Tips for Visitors:

- Student ID cards can get you a discount on tickets. Don't buy from the scalpers if you have one.
- Sunrise is at 7:10 am in late January and about 7 am in February.
- Wear a down jacket, boots, scarf, winter hat and gloves before heading out to see the sunrise. It is extremely cold and windy on the cliff.
- A telephoto lens is a must if you want to take pictures of the birds. Check the forecast if you are hoping to snap a picture of the sunrise: the beach has many foggy mornings.



Photo by blog.yoka.com



Photos by go.360.cn

### Seafood

Seafood at Beidaihe remains fresh and cheap throughout the winter. The ocean crabs and mantis shrimp are giant and delicious. Prices are usually too high at the restaurants near popular tourism spots, but vendors in the local communities are less likely to rip you off.

If you really want to save money, buy your own seafood at a market and ask a restaurant to cook it. Most charge a cooking fee of about 5 yuan per pound of seafood. The local Qinhuangdao Baixue beer is said to be the best match with seafood.

#### Tips for Visitors:

- Shitanglu Aquatic Product Market is the biggest seafood bazaar. Take Bus 10 or 15 and get off at the Shitanglu Pedestrian Mall stop.
- Mala clams are awesome! The shells taste great when fried with green onions and ginger. Steamed crabs tend to be tenderer than stir-fried varieties. But be on guard or else the cook might swap your seafood for something cheaper.
- Lunch for six costs about 168 yuan: 65 yuan for the seafood and the rest for processing and three additional dishes.
- You can also find good food in Biluota Park at the far east end of Beidaihe. There are bars, karaoke clubs and beerhouses.

### Transportation

- Drive 253 kilometers along the Jingshen Highway from Wangjing or Huaweiqiao all the way east to the Beidaihe Exit. A single trip will cost about 125 yuan in road tolls.
- You can also take the high-speed rail from Beijing to Beidaihe. The trip takes 2 hours and 13 minutes and costs 97.5 yuan for a first-class seat or 81.5 yuan for second-class.

### Accommodations

Beidaihe has plenty of hostels that charges no more than 200 yuan per night. These hostels are suitable for students and young people on a tight budget. Hotel prices vary from 300 to 1,000 yuan. The higher end offers spacious rooms suitable for family trips. Learn more at [comment.becod.com](http://comment.becod.com). ■



Photo by CFP





**BY DIAO DIAO**



Originally an adjective, *gāofùshuài* has become a synonym for people who meet the standards of the typical woman. It's also used mockingly by a lot of men who are jealous of those who are taller, richer or smarter.

Ask Beijing Today is our weekly attempt to make life in China less confusing.  
You can email your own questions to [ask@beijingtoday.com.cn](mailto:ask@beijingtoday.com.cn).



For more comics, follow his Sina Weibo feed at [@tangocartoon](#).

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**Meaning:** to return

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EDITOR: YANG XIN ■ DESIGNER: ZHAO YAN



# Q CLASSIFIEDS

## ART



### Blue Bridge Winter Art Camp 2015: Polar Expedition

Want to see learn about the lives of polar bears or the Northern Lights? In Blue Bridge's Winter Workshop for ages 4 to 6 and 7 to 12, students will start a journey to 'explore' the North and South Poles. They will learn about both natural and cultural wonders and make theme-related artwork.

During the camp, students will go on a field trip to conduct some light art exercises and experience animals in real life. They will also watch *Arctic Tale*, a 2007 documentary film from the National Geographic Society about the life cycle of a walrus and her calf and a polar bear and her cubs.

- ⌚ 9 am - 4 pm, February 2 - 6
- 📍 Chaowai SOHO, 6B, Chaowai Dajie, Chaoyang
- 💎 3,280 yuan, includes lunch, snacks, materials and activities
- ☎ CBD Studio (010) 5900 0270  
Lido Studio (010) 5947 2275
- 🌐 chaowaisoho.com/index\_en.html

## STAGE

### Beijing Playhouse Drama Club Workshop: Iambic Pentameter

Shakespeare's plays are performed in the beautiful iambic pentameter of early modern English. In this workshop, we'll give you a quick overview of how it works. BP's stage production of the Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged) will be partially performed in iambic pentameter. Auditioning actors who know how to do it correctly will have a strong advantage at auditions.

If you have lots of experience or none at all, if you are a native speaker of English or still gaining confidence, you are welcome.

Never acted before? Give it a try! Beijing Playhouse, China's English Broadway Theatre, is always looking for experienced actors and undiscovered talent.

- ⌚ 6:30 - 9:30 pm, February 3
- 📍 Beijing Playhouse Drama Club, China Cultural Center on Beijing Maple Drive, 21 Liangmaqiao
- ✉ broadway@beijingplayhouse.com
- 🌐 beijingplayhouse.com

## MUSIC



### Tippa Irie, Blood Dunza, Heavy Hong Kong, Ultimate Band Crew, MC Webber and Oshi

Tippa Irie was born to Jamaican parents in South London, gaining experience as a hard-hitting dancehall toaster on his father's Mobile Reggae Disco Sound system while still in high school. After a series of 12-inch singles on the Greensleeves label, Tippa released his first album, *Is It Really Happening to Me?* Its hit single, "Hello Darling," launched his career. Mad Professor produced his next album, *Rebel on the Roots Corner*, for Ras Records.

It took him almost four years to follow it up, but Mr. Versatile was highly regarded and kept himself visible in the reggae scene. Three years later, the critically-lauded *I Miss* appeared on Resin Music. He has collaborated with Alexander O'Neal, Long Beach Dub All Stars, and Chali 2na and many more. He enjoyed his biggest success in 2003, when he co-wrote the Black Eyed Peas' worldwide hit track, "Hey Mama." He has also collaborated with the London based avant-dancehall outfit, The Bug, on the single "Angry" from the album *London Zoo*.

In 2010, he appeared on the BBC Television panel show *Never Mind The Buzzcocks* in its identity parade round. His latest release is *Stick to My Roots* (2010), done together with the Far East Band and also making a guest appearance on 2013's phenomenal anthem single by Congo Natty's UK ALL STARS.

- ⌚ 10 - 11:30 pm, January 30
- 📍 Yugong Yishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng
- 💎 100 yuan (door), 70 yuan (presale)
- ☎ (010) 6404 2711
- ✉ info@yugongyishan.com
- 🌐 yoopay.cn/event/20150130tippa

### The Adrian Kelly Quartet, Live at DDC

The Adrian Kelly Quartet is not your typical jazz band. Award winning composer and trumpet player Adrian Kelly creates exciting and engaging music ranging from the deeply intimate to ecstatic celebrations and powerful funk grooves.

With wild electric sounds blended with the more traditional jazz textures, the quartet fuses the diverse influences of Miles Davis, Stravinsky, Stockhausen, and Squarepusher.

- ⌚ 9 - 11 pm, February 1
- 📍 Dusk Dawn Club, 14 Shanlao Hutong, Dongcheng
- 💎 50 yuan (door), 40 yuan (presale)
- ☎ (010) 6407 8969
- ✉ DuskDawnClub@gmail.com

## DINING



### A Family Feast for Springtime

Invite family and friends to celebrate Spring Festival with the latest star of Cantonese cuisine, Chef Simon Wu. His Chinese New Year spread at Huang Ting encompasses a magnificent blend of traditional dishes and creative renditions of the classics.

Guests can expect an array of appetizers, barbecued pork belly with honey sauce and bean curd sheet rolls with assorted vegetables to start their evening. Sample local favorites such as braised bird's nest soup with assorted seafood and winter melon, braised chicken with baby abalone and bamboo shoots, and wok-fried prime beef rib with black pepper sauce.

- ⌚ 11:30 am - 10 pm throughout February, except February 20
- 📍 Huang Ting, B2/F, The Peninsula Beijing, 8 Jinyu Hutong, Wangfujing Jie, Dongcheng
- 💎 688 yuan per person
- ☎ (010) 8516 2888 ext. 6707



### Barolo Bubbly Sunday Brunch

Enjoy a Sparkling Sunday with family, friends and loved ones and experience the exceptional talent of Chef Ivan Farnoli. At Barolo, enjoy the authentic culture and cuisine of Italy with an a la carte brunch featuring culinary delights with a contemporary twist.

With his expertise in Mediterranean cuisine, Farnoli creates amazing dishes from locally grown organic and seasonal produce. His personal strengths lie in creativity and a willingness to experiment. Farnoli embarked on his professional culinary career at the age of 16 in his hometown Milan, the fashion capital. His early experience helped him to per-

fect his prowess in the impeccable execution of timeless Italian cooking techniques.

At 21, Farnoli has already worked in Shanghai as the Sous chef of a 5-star hotel. With his passion for serving the very best produce, he brings discerning diners the exquisite and varied cuisine of Italy with his own inimitable style and creativity.

Classic Italian cuisine with a modern twist is served in quiet elegance and cozy ambiance of Barolo, where dining provides an exceptional Italian experience.

- ⌚ 11:30 am - 2:30 pm, January 31
- 📍 The Ritz-Carlton, Beijing, 83A, Jianguo Lu, China Central Place, Chaoyang
- 💎 2 courses for 198 yuan, 3 for 278 yuan, 4 for 338 yuan (plus 15 percent service charge)
- ☎ (010) 5908 8151
- 🌐 ritzcarlton.com/en/Properties/Beijing/Default.htm

## SPORTS

### Home Plate BBQ Super Bowl Party

Home Plate BBQ Sanlitun has five flat-screen TVs and a huge projection screen to guarantee all diners a great view of this year's Super Bowl.

Each ticket includes free drinks like PBR Tall Boys, Coors Gold, Tsingtao, mixed drinks and coffee. You also get unlimited access to a breakfast buffet that only Home Plate BBQ can cook up, along with a juice bar.

During half time, Home Plate BBQ will have an NFL sponsored raffle to give away an authentic NFL Game Day Football and NFL Game Day Jersey.

Tickets are available at Home Plate BBQ Sanlitun starting January 17 at 6 pm. Presale tickets are 275 yuan and 300 yuan at the door on January 18.

Call or WeChat Manager Dave Bob at 13552776165 to make sure there are enough tickets available if you are pressed for time. There are only 140 tickets available, and reservations are not allowed.

Food and drinks included with the ticket start at 6:30 am and end at the end of the game.

- ⌚ 6:30 - 11 am, February 2
- 📍 Home Plate Bar-B-Que, 35 Xiaoyun Lu Courtyard, Chaoyang (20 meters north of Xiaoyun Lu intersection on East Third Ring)
- 💎 50 - 80 yuan per person
- ☎ (010) 5128 5584
- 🌐 homeplatebbq.com

## YACHT



www.hackerboat.com





# HOLIDAY FOODS



CFP Photos

## Eating in on Chinese New Year's

BY DIAO DIAO

**T**he end of the lunar year is drawing near and Beijing families are preparing their Spring Festival Eve menus. The last day of the lunar year is a time for once-a-year gatherings and splendid feasts.

Typically held at the home of the eldest family member, Spring Festival Eve is a time of family unity celebrated with typical favorite such as wontons, dumplings, noodles, nian-gao and fish, each of which has a traditional meaning.

According to an old Chinese creation story, the first man Pan Gu

brought the world out of chaos. The words for chaos and wontons have a similar sound in Chinese, so people eat wontons to put the bad things of the past year behind them.

Dumplings, or jiaozi, are folded throughout the day and boiled and eaten at midnight, the start of the New Year. Midnight is called zi, and jiao has the meaning of replacing. So eating jiaozi is a way to welcome the year.

Yuanxiao, round glutinous balls with sticky filling, are eaten to signify family unity. The round shape

is called "yuan," which is reflected in the Chinese word for togetherness, tuanyuan.

Long noodles are eaten in the hope of long life, and fish, called yu in Chinese, are eaten because of the Chinese idiom "niannian you yu," which means to get richer year by year.

Other dishes are chosen to reflect family and regional preferences. There is usually a meat dish, several kinds of vegetables, a soup and a dessert. Families with fewer members tend to cook simpler dishes. ■



Wontons



Jiaozi



Niangao

## Local Favorites at Najia Xiaoguan

BY DIAO DIAO

**N**ajia Xiaoguan is a famous Beijing restaurant known for its excellent local dishes and old timey decor.

The restaurant doesn't seem like anything special from the outside, but the interior is straight out of the Qing Dynasty. The red lantern by the gate looks like the kind that used to mark the entrances to the homes of noble families. All tableware is celadon, and the menu is made to resemble an ancient tome.

Most of the dishes are delicate recreations of royal favorites like sweet and crispy shrimp served on a royal platter. Its Huangtanzi is a thick, yellow soup with mushrooms and sea cucumbers. It's served with rice and tastes best when piping hot.

Walnut chicken is the restaurant's most ordered dish – it's a sweet and light alternative to the perennial favorite of kung pao.

Star dishes include venison wrapped in steamed bread, pig liver cooked with soy sauce and beef with unhulled rice.

The restaurant also serves Beijing's traditional sour plum soup, osmanthus yams and niangao.

Most dishes cost about 38 yuan. Though some like the beef with unhulled rice cost more than 100 yuan. Expect a long queue for a seat. ■



Sweet and crispy shrimp



Walnut chicken



Huangtanzi

Photos by dianping.com

## MAKE YOUR OWN WITH THIS RECIPE

### Make Your Own Qingzheng Fish

BY DIAO DIAO

**F**ish is all but required to appear on Chinese dining room tables on the eve of Spring Festival. Most Chinese fish is either steamed with light sauce or braised in a thick and tasty dark broth.

When making steamed fish, bass is one of the best choices.



#### Ingredients:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 500g bass       | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 tsp huangjiu      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> red pepper      | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 tsp soy sauce     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> yellow pepper   | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 tsp sesame oil    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> salt and sugar  | <input type="checkbox"/> white pepper powder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10g green onion | <input type="checkbox"/> water               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10g ginger      | <input type="checkbox"/> oil                 |

#### The Steps:

1. Ask the seller to clean and gut the fish. Clean the fish again and score its flesh. Rub it with huangjiu, salt and white pepper powder and leave it to marinate for 10 minutes.
2. Shred the green onion, ginger and yellow and red peppers.
3. Stuff half of the ginger shreds inside the fish. Lay the fish on the green onion and spread some of the remaining shredded ginger on top.
4. Add water to a steaming pot and bring it to a boil. Steam the fish for 8 minutes.
5. Mix sesame oil, soy sauce, sugar, white pepper powder, 50 milliliters of warm water and salt. Stir until the sugar melts.
6. Remove the ginger from the steamed fish and dump the mixture over it. Garnish with more ginger and shredded pepper.
7. Heat the oil in the pan. Pour it over the fish from head to tail once it starts to smoke.
8. Pour the juice mixture over the fish.

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